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SUBJECT: UNDP'S ROLE IN UZBEKISTAN

REF: (A)MALKIN-CHANG E-MAIL OF 11/07/06 (B) 06STATE  
181371

¶1. Begin Summary. As previously reported (Ref A), UNDP in New York has confirmed that, at the request of the Government of Uzbekistan, the UNDP Resident Coordinator (RC) provided \$20,000 USD for the flight of five GOU officials to New York.

There was no programmatic content to the trip. Also, according to UNDP, the RC claims that the purpose of the trip was to "expose these officials to international criticism of the human rights record of Uzbekistan." Instead, the officials came to New York and assisted the Uzbek delegation here in passing a "no-action" motion against a U.S. sponsored GA resolution on human rights in Uzbekistan. The results of this trip, along with the subsequent funded travel of DPRK officials to the recent UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board (at which the UNDP DPRK program was deferred) have prompted the UNDP Administrator to declare a world-wide moratorium on all such trips. In addition, UNDP has informed of an upcoming overseas conference for RCs who work in "sensitive" countries in order to reinforce common guidelines. End Summary.

¶2. Ref B requested USUN to inquire, through UNDP sources, if UNDP Tashkent had funded the travel of a Uzbek delegation to the UNGA to lobby key member states to prevent the Third Committee from adopting a resolution on the Uzbek human rights record.

¶3. On November 7, 2006 USUN Econoff met with UNDP Romesh Muttukumaru, Deputy to the Director of the Bureau for Resources and Strategic Planning, to discuss the travel of the Uzbek officials. UNDP confirmed that the GOU did ask for and receive funding for the trip of five government officials (costing \$20,000 USD in UNDP core funding). The Resident Coordinator in Tashkent told Muttukumaru that he had agreed to fund the trip in order to expose these officials to international criticism of the Uzbek human rights record, which might have a positive effect upon their return to Uzbekistan. According to Muttukumaru, there was no programmatic content to the trip and the RC did not consult with either UNDP superiors or the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent before making his decision to fund the trip.

¶4. The results were the opposite of what the RC claims were intended. The five officials arrived in New York at the time of the Third Committee consideration of the U.S.-sponsored resolution on Human Rights in Uzbekistan and instead, assisted their delegation in passing, by a margin of 74-69 with 24 abstentions, a "no-action motion" that blocked further consideration of this resolution.

¶5. On January 12, Econoff met again with Romesh Muttukumaru on the fringes of an informal prior to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. Muttukumaru informed that the UNDP Administrator had decided to stop all such visits world-wide after the January Board meeting even though they expected some negative feedback from country offices on this decision. This action was taken primarily in reaction to the

subsequent UNDP funding of the travel of North Korean officials to the January Executive Boards. In addition, UNDP is planning an overseas conference for RCs from "sensitive" countries to reinforce common guidelines and discuss problems and best practices.

¶16. Comment: Post expects that Embassy Tashkent will see a lot more of the Resident Coordinator for briefings from now on. However, we also believe that for UNDP, what happened in Uzbekistan is symptomatic of what is going on in other so-called "sensitive" countries, most notably North Korea and Zimbabwe, where RCs have played fast and loose with the regulations in order to maintain in-country operations. It appears that UNDP is unable to make the call to push back in difficult situations, opening the way for abuse. This issue is particularly important in light of the recommendations of the High Level Panel which would give resident coordinators increased authority at the country level.

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